



The Mid-State Messenger

January 2021

Sock Party for Paige



Turning 22 is a big deal for St Elmo student, Paige McWhorter. To help celebrate this milestone, Joan Saatkamp, a.k.a Ms. Joans/ Transition Specialist, arranged for a special lunch and sock party at the unit office. Paige was given Christmas socks to share with her entire class. She plans on continuing to work part-time at KT Boutique in Altamont now that she is graduating from the Vandalia TLC program.

Water For Schools Project: Kraft Heinz

Vandalia School District was the recipient of nearly a \$50,000 donation of filtered water packaged in Capri Sun pouches. When the pandemic hit, the Kraft Heinz plant in Granite City began to make water pouches for their local school district since water fountains were shut down. In an effort to continue to support schools during the pandemic Kraft Heinz continued to make the pouches. Jeff Garde, a Territory Business Manager working with this project, reached out to Dana Bivens, Special Education Coordinator, to inquire about donating water to their schools. Vandalia graciously accepted and are using the nearly 200,000 pouches for sack lunches, classroom drink breaks, and to support our Nourishing Greatness program!



Homecoming Week A Success



Raymond may not have been able to have a homecoming dance, but they still managed to have a spirit week! Christmas spirit week competition between the high school classes happened during the week of December 7th. Activities included tug of war, king and queen election, decorating the halls for Christmas, class floats, Christmas-grams, and dress up! All of these events resulted in one class earning the spirit stick this year! Dress up days included Pajama Day, Tropical Christmas Day, Ugly Sweater Day, Christmas Character Day, and Flannel Friday.

Riding Bikes

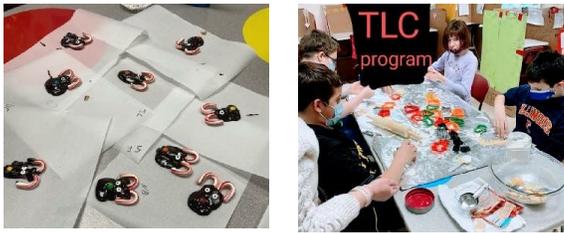


The Litchfield Elementary Life Skills program was fortunate enough to acquire a stationary bike through a very kind and generous donation from Debbie & Larry Krager. Pictured, Austin is learning how to ride the bike. He loves getting on it and is getting valuable exercise at the same time.

Research shows that exercise stimulates learning by improving alertness, attention, motivation, and memory. The bike has been a great addition to the classroom and we appreciate the generous donation.

Life Skills with Christmas Activities

The TLC program housed at Vandalia Junior High school works a lot on daily life skills. The classroom teacher, Whitney Campbell, and her staff teach life skills in a multitude of ways throughout the day. These skills are taught during their collaborative lunches and within the curriculum itself. This Christmas season is no different as they work to make cookies, snacks, and projects.



It Takes a Team to Get the Job Done!



A big thanks goes out to MSSE clerical staff Tammy Burney and Shay Jones for packing up more than 50 gift boxes for MSSE staff and related service providers.

SCISHA- Ethics Training



On December 4, 2020 from 1:00 – 3:00, Theresa H. Rodgers, MA, CCC-SLP, EdS (LD) presented to our amazing group of Speech Language Pathologists providing two hours of ethics training specifically designed to meet the

ethics training requirement for SLPs. The topic of ethics is a pervasive and sometimes challenging one. Many ethical situations are complex with multiple factors and considerations that must be weighed to reach the best possible outcome. Components of the Illinois Professional Conduct Standards (section 1465.95) as well as the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Code of Ethics were highlighted, and a decision-making model was shared which can be applied as issues are encountered. Ethical issues and applicable principles specific to the school-based setting was discussed. Topics included ethical use of social media, supervision, confidentiality, conflict of interest, telepractice, and several other areas of practice. Scenarios depicting potential ethical violations and dilemmas were analyzed and deliberated by participants. We were all very fortunate to participate in this training!

Some BINGO Fun!



Hillsboro Special Education staff participated in a BINGO game. In order to win they decorated for Christmas, shared funny mask stories, wrote thank you notes, reached out to parents, gave themselves credit for all they do for students, and admitted to finding mystery substances on themselves! Working in the field of special education is both rewarding and challenging; having a little fun along the way is so important. So make sure to give yourself some grace, recognize and enjoy the good moments, and always find time to laugh!! Pictured is Lindsey Munson (special education teacher) and Lorinda Jennings (speech therapist). Also a winner was Kathy Baker (special education teacher).